

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-20 OMB-01 SSC-01 PM-07 NSC-10

SPC-03 SS-20 RSC-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00

PA-04 USIA-15 PRS-01 NIC-01 DRC-01 /110 W

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R 211055Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8428

INFO AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL UDORN

13TH ADVON UDORN

USSAG NAKHON PHANOM

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 18177

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, TH

SUBJECT: GOVERNOR REASSIGNMENTS

SUMMARY: INTERIOR MINISTER KAMOL WANNAPRAPA ANNOUNCED SEVERAL IMPORTANT GOVERNOR REASSIGNMENTS NOVEMBER 12, FILLING VACANCIES IN KORAT AND NAKHON PHANOM PROVINCES AND REMOVING AN UNPOPULAR GOVERNOR IN ROI ET. KAMOL IS GRADUALLY REPLACING PRAPHAT'S CRONIES WITH CAREER OFFICIALS. END SUMMARY.

1. INTERIOR MINISTER KAMOL WANNAPRAPA ANNOUNCED THE FOLLOWING REASSIGNMENTS NOVEMBER 12:

(1) ROI ET GOVERNOR, MAJ. GEN. CHAI UBOLDETPRACHARAK, TO THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR.

(2) CHANTABURI GOVERNOR, VICHIT SUKAVIRIYA, TO KORAT REPLACING PRAMUAN SATTHATHIP, WHO HAS BEEN CHARGED WITH COMPLICITY IN A MURDER CASE AND TRANSFERRED TO THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR (BANGKOK 17058).

(3) KALASIN GOVERNOR, VICHIAN VETSAWAN, TO NAKHON PHANOM TO SUCCEED THE LATE GOVERNOR, SUNAN KHAN-ASA.

(4) SISAKET GOVERNOR, PRAMUAN RANGSIKUT, TO ROI ET.

(5) CHIANGMAI VICE GOVERNOR, BOONCHUAY SISARAKHAM, TO  
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CHANTHABURI AS GOVERNOR.

(6) PHETCHABUN VICE GOVERNOR, DAMRONG WACHIRODOM, TO KALASIN AS GOVERNOR.

(7) SISAKET VICE GOVERNOR, CHAU PHETCHOR, PROMOTED TO GOVERNOR OF SISAKET.

2. CHAI LEAVES ROI ET AFTER SERVING AS GOVERNOR FOR ONLY ONE MONTH. HE HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN GOVERNOR OF NONG KHAI UNTIL HIS PATRON, FORMER DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND INTERIOR MINISTER PRAPHAT CHARUSATHIEN, TRANSFERRED HIM TO ROI ET. IN NONG KHAI, CHAI RECEIVED A LARGE NUMBER OF WELL-DESERVED COMPLAINTS ACCUSING HIM OF INEFFICIENCY AND CORRUPTION (BANGKOK 14050). PRAMUAN RANGSIKUT, CHAI'S REPLACEMENT IN ROI ET, SHOULD BE A SLIGHT IMPROVEMENT. ALTHOUGH SLOW MOVING AND UNIMAGINATIVE, PRAMUAN IS HONEST.

3. VICHIT'S TRANSFER FROM CHANTABURI TO KORAT UPSET CHANTABURI RESIDENTS WHERE HE ENJOYED CONSIDERABLE POPULARITY. ACCORDING TO THE "BANGKOK WORLD," OVER 1000 THAI FROM CHANTABURI CAME TO BANGKOK NOVEMBER 16 TO PROTEST HIS TRANSFER (BANGKOK 17960). INTERIOR MINISTRY UNDER-SECRETARY WITHOON CHAKKAPARK LISTENED TO THE PROTESTORS' DEMANDS, BUT GAVE THEM LITTLE ENCOURAGEMENT THAT THE MINISTRY WOULD REVERSE ITS DECISION TO REASSIGN HIM. KORAT IS THE LARGEST PROVINCE IN POPULATION OUTSIDE BANGKOK. BEFORE HIS ASSIGNMENT AS CHANTABURI GOVERNOR, VICHIT SERVED AS A DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL ADMINISTRATION (DOLA) INSPECTOR, DIRECTOR OF THE THAI-SEATO REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER IN UBON, AND DEPUTY DIRECTORY GENERAL OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT.

4. VICHIAN HAS THE NECESSARY EXPERIENCE AND ABILITY TO DEAL WITH THE INSURGENCY SITUATION IN NAKHON PHANOM. BEFORE SERVING AS GOVERNOR OF KALASIN, HE WAS DISTRICT OFFICER OF MUKDAHAN IN NAKHON PHANOM PROVINCE, DEPUTY GOVERNOR OF SAKHON NAKHON, AND A DOLA INSPECTOR IN THE NORTHEAST. IN THE LATTER JOB HE WORKED WITH THE COMMUNIST SUPPRESSION OPERATIONS COMMAND ON INSURGENCY PROBLEMS AND PSYOPS. HE ATTENDED A FOUR-MONTH PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION COURSE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF INDIANA ON A USG GRANT, AND IS FRIENDLY TOWARD AMERICANS.

5. AFTER BECOMING INVOLVED IN A PORK MONOPOLY SCANDAL WHEN  
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HE WAS UDORN DEPUTY GOVERNOR IN 1970-71, BOONCHUAY WAS TRANSFERRED TO THE SAME POSITION IN AYUTTHAYA, A SMALLER PROVINCE. HIS APPOINTMENT AS CHANTABURI GOVERNOR SEEMS TO INDICATE THAT HE HAS OVERCOME THIS TIGMA. HIS PATRON, DEPUTY INTERIOR MINISTER PUANG SUWANNARAT, UNDOUBTEDLY AIDED HIS COMEBACK.

6. DAMRONG IS A CAPABLE CAREER OFFICIAL WHO HAS RISEN THROUGH

THE RANKS OF THE INTERIOR MINISTRY WHERE HE STARTED AS A CLERK MORE THAN 30 YEARS AGO (SEE UDORN'S A-5 OF 4 NOVEMBER 1972). HIS PROMOTION TO GOVERNOR IS LONG OVERDUE.

7. CHAU IS A YOUNG, ENERGETIC CAREER OFFICIAL.

8. COMMENT: THE ASSIGNMENT OF CHAI TO THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR MEANS HE WILL HAVE NO FORMAL POSITION. LIKE FORMER KORAT GOVERNOR PRAMUAN SATTATHIP, CHAI WAS CLOSE TO PRAPHAT AND HAD AN UNSAVORY REPUTATION. THE NEW INTERIOR MINISTER IS GRADUALLY REMOVING PRAPHAT'S POLITICAL CRONIES FROM POSITIONS OF INFLUENCE IN THE MINISTRY AND REPLACING THEM WITH RELATIVELY COMPETENT CAREER OFFICIALS. ALTHOUGH GOVERNOR BURI PHROM-LAKKHANO OF KHON KAEN, ANOTHER CORRUPT AND UNPOPULAR PRAPHAT MAN, RETAINS HIS POSITION FOR THE TIME BEING, HIS DAYS WOULD APPEAR TO BE NUMBERED.  
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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** CABINET, PROVINCIAL OFFICIALS, PROVINCIAL GOVERNOR, PERSONNEL ASSIGNMENTS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 21 NOV 1973  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** golinofr  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1973BANGKO18177  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** n/a  
**From:** BANGKOK  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1973/newtext/t19731121/aaaaapai.tel  
**Line Count:** 132  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE  
**Office:** ACTION EA  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:**  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** golinofr  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 05 DEC 2001  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <05-Dec-2001 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <28-Dec-2001 by golinofr>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** GOVERNOR REASSIGNMENTS SUMMARY: INTERIOR MINISTER KAMOL WANNAPRAPA ANNOUNCED  
**TAGS:** PGOV, PINT, TH, (CHAI UBOLDETPRACHARAK), (VICHIT SUKAVIRIYA), (VICHIAN VETSAWAN), (PRAMUAN RANGSIKUT), (DAMRONG WACHIRODOM), (BOONCHUAY SISARAKHAM)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005